



# Fast Facts

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

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## PRENATAL CARE IN CALIFORNIA

- In 1991, the BabyCal Campaign, a focused, multi-media campaign, was launched to fight low birthweight and infant mortality by combining research, advertising, and community outreach to educate high-risk pregnant women statewide about the importance of prenatal care. BabyCal's mass media messages reach more than 80 percent of low-income women between the ages of 18 and 35 in California, and the toll-free information line receives an average of 3,700 calls each month. Research conducted among the targeted population in 1998 revealed that more than half of women (53 percent) remembered BabyCal messages without prompting and 95 percent recalled the messages when prompted. Exposure to the BabyCal television and radio ads led 80 percent of the respondents to change, or think about changing, their prenatal care and pregnancy-related behaviors. Finally, 30 percent reported that they started prenatal care for the first time after exposure to the BabyCal ads.
- The state has worked to reduce barriers to prenatal and postpartum care in Medi-Cal by establishing the Presumptive Eligibility Program, which allows qualified providers to give their low-income pregnant patients immediate access to prenatal care pending their application for Medi-Cal; the Property Waiver Program, which exempts low-income pregnant women and infants from Medi-Cal's assets test; and the Income Disregard Program, which provides low-income pregnant women and infants with expanded eligibility to free prenatal and well-baby services. The Medi-Cal program also introduced a mail-in application for pregnant women in 1998.
- In 1991, state legislation created Access for Infants and Mothers (AIM), an innovative perinatal care insurance program for uninsured pregnant women. Subsidized by the state, AIM enables moderate-income working women and families who earn too much to qualify for Medi-Cal to secure maternal and infant health care coverage at affordable rates. AIM provides comprehensive health care throughout the pregnancy, delivery, and 60 days post-pregnancy care for the mother and up to two years of complete health coverage for the baby. Since AIM enrolled its first subscriber back in 1992, more than 40,000 women and 32,000 infants in California have benefited from the program.
- Committed to reducing the human and social costs of perinatal substance abuse, the state has expanded the number of treatment centers serving pregnant women and their children from 24 to more than 200. The Perinatal Treatment Expansion Program has served over 8,000 women since 1991 and is now available in all 58 counties.

***As a result of these and other efforts by the state of California to promote prenatal care, California's infant mortality rate has fallen 27.8 percent over the period from 1990 to 1998.***